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Community *notes*

Lunar New Year: The Year of the Dog

The Lunar New Year is celebrated by Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese communities, and we are proud to celebrate this important holiday in Howard County as well. The public is invited to enjoy a celebration of New Year luck and prosperity on Thursday, February 15, 6:00 p.m. at the Lower Level near Lord & Taylor in the Mall of Columbia. This celebration will feature cultural performances and plenty of great food.

Mardi Gras on Main Street

Visit your favorite Main Street shops and restaurants on Saturday, February 10, starting at 12:00 p.m. to celebrate Mardi Gras! Find hidden Mardi Gras masks during the family friendly scavenger hunt to earn beans and win prizes with special sales,



snacks, and libations along the way. Restaurants will be offering New Orleans inspired food and drink all day. For more information, visit Ellicott City Main Street's [website](#).

Celebrate George Washington's Birthday

Celebrate George Washington's Birthday on Presidents' Day at Mount Vernon for free. Mount Vernon has waived all admissions fees for this momentous occasion; might as well make a trip out of it! Witness a presidential tribute and watch Continental soldiers of the Commander-in-Chief's Guard conduct a marching drill, fire their guns, and charge at their enemy in an exciting military demonstration on the bowling green. For more information and to see the full agenda, visit Mount Vernon's [website](#).

Greetings

There are quite a few enlightening and just plain fun events happening this week. I look forward to seeing you around town.

Mary Kay

Presidents' Day Closings



Howard County Government offices, courts, 50+ centers and animal shelter will be closed in observance of the Presidents' Day holiday on Monday, February 19. However, regular trash, recycling and food scrap services will be in effect and the Alpha Ridge Landfill will be open.

While county parks, Gary J. Arthur, North Laurel and Roger Carter Community Centers, Meadowbrook Athletic Complex, Kiwanis-Wallas Hall and Cedar Lane and Schooley Mill Park Activity Rooms will be open, the Robinson Nature Center will be closed. In addition, county historic sites are all closed for the season and will not reopen until April.

The Regional Transportation Agency (RTA) will operate on a regular weekday schedule; for more information on RTA, call 1-800-270-9553 or visit www.transitrt.com.

The 9-1-1 Center, Police and Fire departments remain staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. For emergencies, call 9-1-1; for non-emergencies, call 410-313-2200.

County offices will re-open at regular business hours on Tuesday, February 20.

Girl Up Leadership Summit

On Saturday, February 24th from 11:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M., various Girl Up club leaders from Howard County will be holding the 2nd Annual Howard County Regional Girl Up Leadership Summit for middle and high school students in Maryland!

This year, we are expecting an attendance of over 50 students, and we would love for you to join us in this inspiring event! The summit will feature a day of panels with female professionals from the community, workshops on how to advocate for national Girl Up-related legislation, and a vendor fair where students can learn about opportunities to take leadership in other female empowerment campaigns in the Maryland area. Speakers include Nora Franco of the Planned Parenthood Metropolitan Washington Action Fund, Heidi Griswold of Hopeworks, and Tracy Turner, Executive Director of the Howard County Tech Council.

The cost of entrance is \$10, which includes lunch, and all of the proceeds will go to Girl Up. Register your spot [here](#).

Haven on the Lake Pre-Valentine's Day Event

You don't need to wait until Valentine's Day for something sweet and savory. Indulge in a sampling of wines from The Iron Bridge Wine Company, cheeses from Cabot Creamery, and decadent chocolates from Parfections Handmade Gourmet Chocolates. This event will also feature local vendors and pop-up shops, so you can find the perfect gift for your significant other (or yourself).

Those who register in advance will be entered to win a door prize during the event. For more information and to register, visit the event [listing](#).

Earth Beneath My Feet

Ned Tillman, an earth scientist and award winning author, will take participants on a ride from deep within the core of the Earth all the way up to the soil between our toes. Visit the Howard County Conservancy (10620 Old Frederick Rd.) on Thursday, February 8, 7:00 p.m. for this free informational event. Visit the Howard County Conservancy's [website](#) for more information.

Heart Health Events

February is American Health Month! Take this time to learn more about how to take care of your body. About 610,000 people die of heart disease in the United States every year - that's 1 in every 4 deaths, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. Attend the Heart Healthy Event at the Savage Branch Library on February 12 and again on February 22, 4:00 - 5:30 p.m. and start learning more about what you can do to take care of your heart. Visit the Health Department's [website](#) for more information.



Howard County Police Museum

Have you visited the Howard County Police Museum yet? Located at 8267 Main St. in Ellicott City, the museum features exhibits detailing the bravery, dedication and sacrifices displayed by the men and women of HCPD while keeping this community safe since the department's founding in 1952. Visitors can learn more about the stories of officers who have given their lives in service as well as major cases the department has investigated.

Discover how the department has evolved and changed over the years to keep pace with society. For more information, visit the museum's [website](#).

Rooftop Solar Workshop

Curious about rooftop solar but not sure where to start? Retrofit Baltimore, a project of the non-profit Civic Works, is holding an information session for Howard County homeowners to learn more about the basics of solar power, the installation process and financial considerations. Based on the same principal as buying in bulk, homeowners can save 20 percent off the standard cost of a solar system through this solar co-op.

As a non-profit community resource, Retrofit Baltimore serves as an advocate and guides homeowners through each step of the process. An energy advisor will offer personalized assistance, answer questions and ensure that you receive quality service from a screened contractor.

The Columbia Association is hosting the meeting on Tuesday, February 20, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m. at the Owen Brown Village Center. Please [register](#) ahead of time if you are interested in attending.

And We Dance for the Children

And We Dance for the Children is an annual fundraiser for the Continental Societies benefitting underserved children in the Southeaster Howard/ Laurel Community. Celebrate our children by attending this event at the Sheraton Columbia Town Center Hotel on March 3, 8:00 p.m. - 12:00 a.m. Visit their [website](#) for more information and to purchase tickets. If you cannot attend, make a donation! Thank you in advance for your support.

Misako Ballet Company



Join Misako Ballet Company for "Reflections on Nature" in memory of Eva Anderson. This afternoon of dance performance and Japanese folklore will take place on Saturday, February 18, 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. at the Jim Rouse Theater.

The program features "The Grateful Crane," a one act Japanese story ballet, excerpts from the ballet Esmeralda, and the contemporary ballet, "Waterflow." For more information, call 410-884-9690 or visit their [website](#).

2018 Vegan Mac 'n Cheese Championship

Sample dozens of vegan mac 'n cheeses created by chefs from around the country and cast your vote for the very best this Saturday, February 10, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel at the Inner Harbor. Last year, over 2,000 people came out to sample amazing vegan mac 'n cheese recipes. This year is looking like it'll be bigger and better than ever. For more information and to register, please visit the event [website](#).

Robinson Nature Center Saturday Events

The Robinson Nature Center is the place to be this Saturday, February 10! Here are a couple of events to look forward to:

Lil' Stars

Give your child a special nighttime experience during the day (10:30 - 11:00 a.m.) by letting them discover outer space through interactive activities! Each month at the Robinson Nature Center focuses on a different theme. February's theme is "Super-Duper Stars". [Pre-register](#) to secure your spots.

Valentine's Day Truffle-Making & Wine-Tasting

Learn the art of hand-rolling chocolate truffles while discovering more about the plant from which chocolate is made. Enjoy tastings from local winery, Liganore Vineyards, and learn about the sustainable practices they use in their business. Each person samples 6 wines and leaves with eight, hand-rolled truffles. There will be two sessions, the first one is from 1:00 - 3:00 p.m. and the second is from 4:00 - 6:00 p.m. For more information and to register, visit the event [page](#).

Vendors Sought for GreenFest

Vendor applications are available for Howard County's annual **GreenFest** on Saturday, April 21, 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Howard Community College. Last year's event drew over 3,000 attendees and featured approximately 100 commercial and non-profit vendors with information about how to live a more ecologically-sound lifestyle.

Each exhibit space includes a 5' table and two chairs. Cost to non-profits is \$25 per space; cost to other entities, including commercial businesses is \$35 per space. The application is due on Friday, February 23. Preference will be given to local businesses and organizations that promote environmentally-friendly goods and services. Vendor applications and more information are available on the **GreenFest** [website](#).

Volunteer for the Tech Café

Volunteers are wanted to show older adults how to get the most of their digital devices as part of the Tech Café program. Tech Café will be held at East Columbia 50+ Center, 6600 Cradlerock Way. Sessions run from 3:30 - 4:30 p.m. on February 6; March 6; April 10; May 1; and June 5.

Please contact the East Columbia 50+ Center at 410-313-7684 or CA's Youth and Teen Center at 410-992-3726 if you are interested.

Upcoming Events & Reminders

40th Annual Irish Evening

Friday, February 9 • 7:30 p.m.

Smith Theater, Howard Community College

This evening will feature a reading by award-winning author Mike McCormack, new and traditional Irish music performed by Narrowbacks, and step dancing. This is a night you won't want to miss; purchase your tickets ahead of time [online](#).

HCC Dance Festival Gala

Saturday, February 10 • 7:00 p.m.

Horowitz Center

The Howard Community College (HCC) Dance Program, with support of the Howard County Arts Council, will present its annual Howard County Community Dance Festival Gala. Cost of admission is \$10 and tickets can be purchased [online](#).

Now You See It; Now You Don't

Wednesday, February 14 • 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Historic Oakland

Celebrate Valentine's day by attending an evening of high fashion and suspenseful mystery. It is up to you to solve the mystery of the missing diamond. For more information, visit the [event listing](#).

Black History Expo

Saturday, February 17 • 11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Long Reach High School

This free event will include panel discussions featuring community leaders and veterans, exhibits, performances by elementary, middle, and high school students, and will have a Black History Jeopardy competition. For more information, visit HCPSS's [website](#).

HC Library Evening in the Stacks

Saturday, February 24 • 7:00 - 11:00 p.m.

East Columbia Library

Join the Friends & Foundation of the Howard County Library System for the annual fête featuring some favorite collective memories from the 1950's to the 1980's. Expect great music, food and drink along with fun activities for all the guests. Tickets are \$150 per guest. Click [here](#) for all the details.



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